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FTAA.soc/w/40/add.1
14 April, 1999

SUBMISSION TO
THE TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE
ON THE FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS
BY THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY
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MARCH 1999

protection for environmental, labour and human rights.

V1 Conclusion

If an effective FTAA is going to be successfully negotiated several factors need to be considered i) civil society needs to be engaged in the negotiation process; ii) there needs to be a redistribution of wealth between trading partners and within trading countries; iii) environmental protection issues have to be linked to trade issues; and iv) workers rights, environmental standards and human rights need to be addressed.

An effective FTAA must focus on trade as a means and not an end in itself. The end is fairer trade, a reduction in pollution and environmental destruction, a better quality of life for the majority and a more just society. The end is not higher profits for a few multinational corporations or the support of an economy based on the over exploitation of natural resources and the destruction of the environment. An effective FTAA must respect human rights, worker rights and the environment so as to ensure that trade benefits all people and not just the fortunate few. These obligations must be established in the body of the trade agreement.

The North American economy - the fossil-fuel-based, automobile-centred, throw-away economy is in trouble. An effective FTAA cannot promote this model but has to promote a sustainable economic system that protects workers rights, the environment and promotes a more just society. This requires wide ranging, radical change and enormous political will and commitment.

We have a responsibility to future generations to ensure that an effective FTAA is negotiated along the lines of a sustainable economic system. We have an obligation to aspire to take the lead in moving toward a sustainable society. The FTAA gives us an opportunity to show that leadership.